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## Facilitating Effective Communication Between Foreigners and Americans at Utah State University

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FACILITATING EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

BETWEEN FOREIGNERS AND AMERICANS

AT UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY

by

Aruneeprabha Homsettee

A report submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree

of

MASTER OF ARTS

in

Communication

Plan B

Approved:

Utah State University

Logan, Utah

1975

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Aruneeprabha Homsettee

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## PURPOSE OF STUDY

As one of the foreign students in this country, I have had a lot of problems while studying here. For example, how should I express myself, how should I behave when going to an American party and participating in other traditional occasions such as Halloween, Christmas, Thanksgiving, etc. Also, how can I learn about Americans' activities and manners? Some of them I can solve by learning from others or by myself. Many Americans have trouble when communicating with foreigners. They try hard, but they often do not understand each other.

Information from both Americans and foreigners indicates that if they want to communicate effectively they need to know about the others' attitudes, values, experiences, manners, expectations and cultures. The most important factor for effective communication is each individual's willingness to communicate.

The purpose of this investigation is to explore problems, barriers, and gaps in communication between American and foreign students. The following areas will be developed: (1) cultural differences in attitudes, values, mores, and manners, (2) communication barriers related to language problems, (3) attitudes of Americans and foreigners towards each others, and (4) some suggested guidelines for more effective communication. The goals of

this investigation are: first, to use theoretical, experimental and survey data to determine what major problems exist in the attempt to communicate interculturallly, and second, to provide some behavioral suggestions for improving the interaction attempt.

#### Method of Study

In studying this problem, several types of information were utilized. First, journals and books were read to categorize the types of problems and strategies discovered by other researchers; second, a questionnaire was administered to forty-two American students and forty-one foreign students at Utah State University during Spring quarter, 1975. The American students were members of a Communication 101 class. They represented all four undergraduate years, and many majors across the entire university. The foreign students were members of an intensive English course required of all foreign students at Utah State University. They represented many countries and were a fair cross-sampling of the foreign student population. The questionnaire consisted of sixteen questions for American students and eighteen questions for foreign students (see Appendix A and B). The questionnaire was a self-report instrument which attempted to record the student's communicative behaviors by noting their perceptions and reports of their own behavior. Questions were based on areas of communication problems and strategies

noted by such researchers as Hall (1956) and others. Each student filled out the questionnaire individually during class time and handed it in to the classroom instructor. Multiple choice questions were combined with open-ended questions.

Answers to each question were analyzed to determine the percentage of each student population who indicated each possible answer. A percentage analysis was also performed to compare male and female respondents. Since no major differences in answer choices were seen when comparing men and women, this analysis was not included in the rest of the paper. Questions were designed to measure student's attitudes towards making friends from other cultures, visiting and dating people from other cultures, and their perception of major verbal and nonverbal communication barriers. Answers were combined with theoretical and experimental findings throughout the paper.

#### Chapter Summary

The first chapter concerns contact between cultures; and the general communication problems of foreign students.

Chapter II describes various aspects of nonverbal communication and culture value which may keep people apart.

Chapter III analyzes attitude barriers between foreigners and Americans.

The last chapter describes problems of language and



advances several guidelines to improve intercultural communications.

## Chapter I

### NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

In this chapter two questions are advanced. (1) Why do people from different nations communicate? (2) What are their problems in communicating?

#### Contact between Cultures

Many occasions provide opportunities for intercultural contact. For example, businessmen from one country travel to other countries for their business. Students study in other countries. Missionaries travel to foreign countries to proselytize their beliefs and religions. Peace Corps volunteers work in other countries. War has also created cultural interactions. Brown (1963) noted that during World War II and the Korean War, men of various races, languages and religions, fought side by side in the same units, shared the same rations, and wore the same uniforms. After the war they went back to their homes with new ideas, new standards, new values, and new desires. Many tourists travel all over the world. Foreign government missions and agencies exist in many nations. Various commissions of the United Nations, international, state, and private agencies move into trouble areas to help with local problems. These examples demonstrate how possible and necessary it is for people from different cultures to communicate with each other.

In the United States the total number of foreign students has exceeded 100,000. In 1967 there were 90,000 academic students and at least 30,000 foreigners engaged in professional training (Ingrid, 1970).

The language barrier is only one problem facing most foreigners. Other barriers, both visible and invisible, impede the progress of many who come here to learn. The questionnaire indicated that 20% of foreign students at Utah State University have trouble in different cultural experiences, mannerisms, beliefs, values and expectation (see Table 1).

#### Problems in Culture and Communication

It is inevitable that when communication takes place between two cultures, problems arise. Many difficulties result when messages are relayed across cultural boundaries because they are encoded in one language and decoded in another. In responding to the questionnaire, many Americans and foreign students said that they were frustrated when they could not express themselves to the others. This greatly increased the possibility of misunderstanding and of unexpected reactions. Hoggart (1971) gave a clear idea of how people feel when communicating in a foreign land. If someone enters another country where he has never been before he will feel lost and have a hard time staying there. He will realize how different his native culture is, and if he compares them he may develop prejudice.

When someone enters another culture he must be aware of the signals and symbols which have different meanings in different cultures. For example, in Thailand, unlike this country, very few people pay attention to stop signs. Sometimes they pass them without stopping when the road is clear. Words which mean one thing in the United States may not often be translated exactly in other languages. If someone asks for lemon in Thailand he will get a lime instead. In Thailand a "cherry" is a different kind of fruit. Even in some English speaking nations a "subway" may be called an "underground," or an "elevator" may be called a "lift." Language, then, is one of the main factors which causes misunderstandings. Each language has many aspects to cope with, including its own pattern, tone of voice, vocabulary and tense. Mispronunciation and grammar are included as possible barriers. Eighty-one percent of Americans and 71% of foreign students said that language was very important. (See Tables 1 and 2). The problem of language can be solved if one has learned each language well.

Much of the difficulty in intercultural communication is not just a matter of understanding the words, but of understanding nonverbal signals that are generally encoded automatically within a single culture so that communicators are unconscious of them. From country to country people have different nonverbal cues influenced by religions, colors, races, languages, and geographic surround-

ings. At the social level they are different in manners, values, ideas, and feelings. Many Americans and foreigners noted that they used other channels such as facial expressions, hand gestures, talking louder or slower than usual to increase their communicative effectiveness.

Another problem related to communication is evaluations. Many people have the attitude that their nations are better than others. One American student stated that he could not lower himself to the same level as foreigners. Also, some Americans and foreigners stated that they did not want to know about other nations because they thought their own culture was the best. Brown (1963) asserted:

The study of other cultures indicates the almost specific act. What might be considered right and proper in one society may be considered wrong in another society. Further, judgments are based on experience and each experience is interpreted in terms of one's own enculturation so that even our perception of the physical world is to some extent viewed through this enculturative screen. (p. 52)

Each person should be allowed to behave according to his/her norms regardless of how they may appear to other people with different norms.

People often make their judgments based on their expectations or assumptions without being open-minded. Stereotypes result because people assume that the people they know or see represent all others in the country. I have heard many foreign students say that Americans are unfriendly and difficult to get-along with, but I do not agree with them because many foreign students including

myself have met many friendly Americans. On the other hand, some Americans have a hard time understanding some foreigners so they assume all foreigners cannot be understood. This is only a stereotype. It may be asserted that the positive and negative impression which each individual forms about the others depends on the situation and the individual he meets.

Religion also differentiates between people. Buddhist people believe that the upper part of the body must be respected. They will not pat someone's head or point a foot at anyone. They will not step or sit on books (which they regard as teachers). The Buddha image is always placed at the top of the stairs and can never be at the foot of the bed in a bedroom. The Buddhist people are very insulted and angry when they see the Buddha image used as a paper weight, a hat stand, or for any decorative purpose. The Cross, which is respected very highly by the Christians is regarded as important as the Buddha image. Other religions, such as Moslem, do not allow people to eat pork. Knowing about beliefs and taboos will help an individual to avoid mistakes; it will also build a good rapport between people with different religions.

#### Summary

When people from different cultures contact each other there may be a lot of communicative problems. These problems arise from differences in cultural experiences,

manners, beliefs, values, expectations, languages, and religions. Words which mean one thing in one country may not mean the same thing in other countries. Accepting, learning and following other cultural dictates will avoid many mistakes in the communicative process.

## Chapter II

### NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION AND VALUES

When all verbal communication channels are closed, most interactants turn to nonverbal communication as their only possible means of communicating. Since nonverbal symbols and signals are not universal, however, relying too heavily on nonverbal communication may create disagreements and misunderstandings. This chapter will explore basic nonverbal symbols and signals which may enhance or deter intercultural communication. At the same time, this chapter will explore basic value orientations which pervade peoples from different cultures. These different value orientations may create problems in intercultural communication as people simply assume that their frames of reference are true and right in all situations.

#### Appointment Time

Some countries do not emphasize punctuality. Thai people have "Thai time" when they are late for a party. In Latin America it is common to spend hours waiting for an appointment. Unlike these people, Americans have a tendency to do everything exactly on schedule (Brown, 1959). Imagine what would happen if people from many countries had appointments together.



### Main Point

In some nations it is proper to include every conceivable detail in a discussion. Americans tend to discuss the main points first and let the details take care of themselves. When people from different cultures communicate, they sometimes do not understand why others converse the way they do. Sometimes the American way will appear impolite or rude to other people. On the other hand, to include all details will be considered a waste of time for Americans (Smith, 1966).

### Social Distance and Territoriality

Every culture has a proper distance for communication (Hall, 1959). In some cultures, such as China, Thailand, Malaysia, Burma, etc., people stand close when talking. In Thailand men who are not a woman's husband or cousin are not allowed to touch her. Also in Thailand, the lower class (servant, students, youth, etc.) never sit on the same level as the higher class (master, teacher, elder, etc.). Answers to the questionnaire suggested that both Americans and Foreigners will feel comfortable if they stand 15 to 24 inches away from the other (Tables 1 and 2). It may also depend on the situation.

### Status and Class Distinction

Status distinction makes it very difficult for people of different status levels to express themselves

freely and frankly in discussions and arguments. In most traditional countries, the pattern has been for the person of lower status not to express disagreement to his superior in any face-to-face contact. Most Asian people tend to follow the ancestral dictates, unlike Americans who prefer to make their own decisions and have a tendency to feel guilty if they fail to speak frankly (Smith, 1966).

### Neighborhood

In Latin American and many countries in Asia, houses are often built around a patio that is next to the sidewalk but hidden from outsiders behind a wall. Americans who live in these countries complain that they feel out; shut off. Others wonder what is going on "behind these walls" (Cleveland, 1960).

In France and England, for instance, the relations between neighbors are more distanced than in the United States. In England, neighbor children generally do not play together as they do in America. When they do play, arrangements are sometimes made a month in advance as though they were going to the other side of town (Hall, 1959).

In the United States, on the other hand, proximity is the basis of many relationships. To them, the neighbor is actually quite close. Being a neighbor provides certain rights and responsibilities. They can borrow things, including food and drinks, but they may also have to take

the neighbor to the hospital in an emergency. In this way a neighbor may be almost as close as a cousin. For these reasons the American tries to choose his/her neighborhood carefully because he knows that he is going to be thrown into intimate contact with people.

Sometimes it is hard for other people to understand this pattern. When foreigners come to stay in this country sometimes they feel uncomfortable if they have to assume the roll of neighbor.

#### Classification of Values

Problems in intercultural communication may arise from differences between cultures. The misunderstandings and mistakes resulting from cultural difference are not only apparent in a people's resistance to change but also occur in the communication process itself.

Some problems in communication and perception may be a direct consequence of contrasting values or perspectives. These type of misunderstandings or problems occur because members of each group assume others to have their own values, especially those that tend to be acted upon unconsciously.

Forster (1965) contrasted the classification of American values which frequently differ with those of non-Westerners. Below is a description of Forster's main distinctions in values between the Western and the non-Western cultures.

Control of environment. People unconsciously look at the world in different ways. Non-Westerners tend to work with nature rather than attempting to conquer it. They accept the world as they find it. In contrast, Americans usually conceive of nature as something to be conquered and changed to meet man's needs. To Americans, man is the master.

Progress. Change is an important part of life, but every culture has different attitudes toward it. Non-Western people tend to seek guidance from tradition. Americans are more able to make decisions by themselves about their future.

Materialism. Americans typically look for results that can be proved. Many non-Western people are more likely to find satisfaction in an aesthetic or spiritual value, which involves the inner experience of man. Americans stress material comfort and convenience. It is not unusual for Americans to judge other nations by the presence or quality of their plumbing or refrigeration.

Personal success. Social status is a key dimension in understanding human motivation. The members of a traditional society are likely to regard their role as fixed and unquestionable. In contrast, an American's self-esteem is closely tied to his/her personal success and "natural" desire to get ahead. The competitiveness of American life is a by-product. This need for self-

mastery, personal achievement, and success is the personalized version of the general American emphasis on progress and mastery of the physical and social environment.

Autonomy. In American cultures, where individual responsibility is stressed, the focus of decision resides within the individual. In non-Western cultures decisions are more likely to be made by a group or someone in authority.

Puritanism. Most non-Westerners always work and relax at the same time. They do not understand American's sharp separation of work and play, his impartial sense of duty and service to others. This will make them think that Americans are too serious to work with.

Moralistic orientation. The characteristic spirit of Americans is to persuade other people to their way of thinking. Americans tend to judge an individual impersonally. People in non-Western nations do not convert people or make impersonal moralistic judgments.

Humanitarianism. The American's moralistic and egalitarian outlook provides a motivation for generosity and compassion. In developing nations this motivation is also present, but in a more paternalistic, more personal, and less organized form. However, the strength of this concern for others outside one's own group is undoubtedly greater among Americans. In non-Western cultures there is less concern for those outside one's family or clan.

Time orientation. Americans are generally very time conscious, treating time as a material thing. It should be actively mastered, or manipulated to best advantage, out of a sense of duty and responsibility. Non-Western people usually measure time on a completely different scale, regard it as a phenomenon to be passively accepted and, perhaps, enjoyed.

Scientific orientation. The Western world has adopted scientific reasoning as the unquestioned way of understanding the physical world. The people of other nations are not as ready to accept scientific explanations as the most rational. They are more likely to be guided in their behavior by mysticism, authority, or tradition.

Interpersonal behavior. Intercultural misunderstandings often result from a difference in the rules of interpersonal communication regarding such things as etiquette, gestures, mannerisms, and demeanor. Perhaps the most frequent cause of difficulty is the contrast between the American's openness and friendliness on brief acquaintance, and the formality and face-saving manner of many other people, especially those of the oriental culture.

#### Summary

Americans and non-Westerners differ in their values and social life. Comparing these differences will allow people to know each other better. Also, this knowledge will enhance the progress toward communicative affectiveness.

### Chapter III

#### ATTITUDES OF FOREIGN AND AMERICAN STUDENTS

Communication may be helped or hindered by the attitudes individuals have towards each other while communicating. This chapter will explore American and foreign students' attitude towards each other to determine their positive or negative effects on communications.

##### Foreign and American Student Attitude

Many foreign students who come from less advanced to more highly developed countries are looking for something better than they have at home. Survey answers demonstrated that many foreign students admired the American standard of living. Some of them felt hurt if their hosts treated them with disrespect because of their assumed lower national status, especially if the judgment was based on incomplete and inaccurate facts. Nevertheless, 56% of the American students stated that their attitudes changed in a positive direction after they had met some foreigners (Table 2). Thirty-five percent of foreign students had more positive attitudes and 12% of them had more negative attitudes, while 53% had no change in their attitudes after meeting Americans (Table 1).

Researchers interested in intercultural communication investigated this area. After many surveys and experiments,

these experimenters found that many factors caused different attitudes among foreigners about Americans. In the present survey 53% of the foreign students reported that Americans were ambivalent about talking about their foreign country. Thirty percent of the Americans were appreciative and 70% were hostile. Eighty-nine percent of the foreign students indicated they wanted to know more about America. Forty-three percent of the foreign students were willing to date Americans; 53% of Americans would date foreigners (Tables 1 and 2). The positive or negative attitude of Americans depends on an individual's background, his social position in his own society and his view of the world. At USU it appears that a majority of American and foreign students have positive attitude towards each other and are willing to communicate with each other.

#### Experimental Research

Scott (1965) found that Swedish students admired American habits of self-criticism, their apparent lack of jealousy, and their cooperative team spirit. On the other hand, they were highly critical of the gap between principle and practice in American politics, or racial prejudice, and of the shifts and uncertainties in American foreign policy.

Bressler (1965) reported that Indian students were struck by the "calloused" attitudes of young Americans



toward their parents and elders. He reported their family and interpersonal relationships to be deeper and warmer than the relationship they observed and participated in America. Nevertheless, many Americans with whom I have talked say that their ways of life are more free and liberal than foreigners'.

Sewell, Morris, and Davidsen (1954) reported that Scandinavian students characterized Americans and their culture as immature. This trait was evidenced by the behavior of Americans which they characterized as happy-go-lucky, self-evident, exuberant, free, careless, reckless, uninhibited, flippant, wasteful, noisy, inconsiderate. They also believed that "Americans do not know what they want except money. American jazz is believed to be their only cultural export; students in the United States learn art, music or architecture without sentiment. Emphasis on technology makes them forget art and nature.

#### Mass Media and Attitudes

The mass media is another factor influencing foreigners' perceptions of Americans. Before coming to this country, I thought America would resemble its image, in actions and attitudes. In the future mass communication will play an important part in building, reinforcing, and changing international images. Without an actual experience in another country, an individual is forced to frame his/her attitude about that country on information from the media.

Questionnaire results showed that 80% of Americans and foreigners have changed their attitudes in a positive direction after visiting other countries (Tables 1 and 2).

### Summary

Both Americans and foreigners have attitudes about each other which depend on the individual's background. Though many experimenters have tried to summarize the attitudes between Americans and foreigners, results are not yet clear. The USU study shows 56% of Americans and 35% of foreigners have more positive attitudes after communicating with each other. They also want to know more about the others' country. Though many of them have problems with verbal language and cultural differences, 44% of Americans and 51% of foreigners say they would willingly attend each other's parties if they were invited. Ninety-one percent of Americans and 79% of foreigners say they can understand each other better if they have had a lot of personal contact. Also, 81% of Americans and 88% of foreigners think it is possible to communicate effectively. Finally, 93% of Americans and 76% of foreigners feel they have benefited by knowing each other (Tables 1 and 2). These positive attitudes should play a vital roll in improving communicative effectiveness since they demonstrate a desire to interact on a personal level.

## Chapter IV

### GUIDELINES FOR BETTER COMMUNICATION

This chapter will focus on several specific verbal and nonverbal language difficulties in intercultural communication. Verbal language problems such as vocabulary, mispronunciation and the like, will be emphasized. Finally, seven guidelines for effective intercultural communication will be advanced.

#### Perception of Status

In the survey, question number four, asked American students how they feel when communicating with foreigners. Eighteen percent of them indicated that they feel superior. Some felt they had more common sense than foreigners, and also that they understood this country better. Seventy percent felt inferior. Some thought that foreign students were more intelligent. One American wrote: "I feel they [foreigners] can learn English and communicate here. They are doing a great deal more than I could." Seventy-five percent of the Americans felt equal because they believed all people are created equal. "I figure they are just as much a person as I am and when I was in foreign country I was treated well, so I owe it to them"

In response to a similar question, 85% of the foreigners felt equal. Some believed that all human beings are equal. "We are equal and there is no difference

between people." Ten percent of the foreign students felt inferior, mainly due to the language barrier. This factor made Americans authorities in their view. "Sometimes I cannot explain what I think in English." Five percent felt superior. For some this feeling arose out of a sense of pride for their ability to study side by side with American students.

The status problem could be resolved if foreigners could speak and understand English better. This class problem arises from the individual's prejudices, pride, and attitudes. To make any progress in communication, people must change their ideas and beliefs about people from other nations and accept them as equal.

#### Verbal Language Problems

Question number six asked about the frustration Americans had when communicating with foreigners. The language barrier seemed to be the main problem. Seventy-six percent of the Americans reported difficulties in understanding foreign students' vocabularies. Foreigners often misinterpreted American idioms. Fifty percent of the Americans reported speaking louder or slower than usual when communicating to foreigners. Forty-three percent said they had difficulty understanding foreign accents and pronunciation. They had to ask foreigners to repeat what they said. This embarrassed the Americans. Fifty-seven percent of the Americans believed that if they

spoke other languages, it would improve their communication. Twenty-one percent of the Americans realized, after communicating with foreigners, that words mean different things to different people. Words can be translated into other languages but still differ in their implications. Five percent gave up after failure to communicate with a foreigner.

Similar questions received these answers from foreigners. They also perceive their problem to stem from the language barrier. One of them said that the foreign student advisor criticized his language while they were conversing. This is amazing, for the advisor's purpose is to contact and help foreign students with their problems. Seventy-one percent of the foreign students had vocabulary problems. Ninety-eight percent had studied English before coming to this country. The lack of practice in daily conversation in their countries makes it impossible for them to use English and to choose the right words at the time they are needed. Three foreigners reported that they felt bad when Americans stopped talking to them because of their language problems. One felt that Americans are prejudiced against minorities. Despite these frustrations, 75% of the Americans and 83% of the foreigners commented that they could get along together with few problems.

### Benefits of Intercultural Communication

Question number sixteen asked foreigners if they perceived any advantage, other than academic knowledge, from meeting and knowing Americans. They answered in the affirmative. Through this contact they learn about attitude, beliefs, expectations, activities, habits, values and manners. This information can be used to adapt to and cope with living experiences while in this country. They can also practice their English and transfer their knowledge to Americans. They can bring back the knowledge from this country and apply it in their countries. On the other hand, Americans can learn about other countries and realize the differences between cultures.

### Communication Guidelines

The last question asked how communication could be improved between foreigners and Americans. Both groups gave similar answers. Ten Americans suggested having more classes together, learning about each other's cultures and backgrounds, and also participating in activities together. "By this way, Americans and foreigners will get closer and know each other better than before." Four foreigners and two Americans complained that Americans were unwilling to speak with foreigners. These foreigners indicated that Americans demonstrate this unwillingness to communicate in subtle ways. For example, they pretend to be in a hurry. Some of them ignore what foreigners say. This can

be improved by a desire on both sides to communicate. Americans and foreigners must eliminate their prejudices and accept others. Prejudices arise when they do not know each other well enough to understand each other.

Only 2% of the foreign students felt strongly that communications between Americans and foreigners cannot be improved. This attitude results from bad experiences with Americans.

Fifty-seven percent of Americans have a hard time with nonverbal cues. They are concerned about the unpredictable manners, facial expressions and body gestures of foreigners. But 91% indicated that as time passed they could understand foreigners better.

From the author's experience, it has been found that many Americans who are successful in communicating with foreigners not only by studying their cultures but by using their own skills to communicate, never stereotype foreigners as strangers. They try to speak slowly and use simple words. They never make fun of the foreigner's pronunciation or vocabulary. They also try to befriend and to accept them as they are.

To summarize, these are the principal ways by which individuals can communicate more effectively with each other:

1. By using actual physical touch.
2. By making use of body gestures and movements.

3. By using symbols which are easily understood.
4. By accepting all people as equal.
5. By helping foreigners with their language, both spoken and written.
6. Foreigners must try to learn the language and be willing to disclose themselves to Americans.
7. Both Americans and foreigners must increase their social and communicative contact with one another to reduce the misunderstandings and prejudices resulting from a lack of information. They must be willing to deal with individuals rather than their expectations and national stereotypes.

A willingness to help is very important if people want to improve communication between foreigners and Americans. Help should be offered from an equality framework so that foreigners will not feel inferior.

#### Summary

The purpose of this paper was to investigate the causes and solutions of communication problems occurring between American and foreign students at Utah State University and elsewhere. Information for this purpose was gathered through personal experience, experimental research, and a survey questionnaire administered to foreign and American students at Utah State University. The information supported the contention that one of the greatest causes of poor communication between these groups is a



lack of desire and opportunity for communication. Another basic problem arose from negative attitudes which each group adopted toward the other. Verbal and nonverbal language problems added to these communication difficulties.

After analyzing the research data, seven guidelines for better communication were offered. Each of these guidelines was based on the analysis of a specific communicative problem.

No matter how well you think you can survive in another land, when you stay abroad your feelings and attitudes will differ from what you were used to at home. As Hoggart (1971) wrote:

Living abroad makes you think as you have not done before about the relations between the different parts of a society, about what each part assumes about those relations, and how that affects the way different parts speak to each other. At the start, you have a strong feeling of distance from any society. You are so out of touch that you feel impalpable. You can't 'take much for granted,' to an extent that gives that old expression a yet sharper meaning; you are nearly tone deaf. (p. 35)

From the author's experiences traveling to many countries, such as Hong-Kong, Japan, Korea, Greece, England, France, South Vietnam, Singapore and the United States, and also from experience with foreign friends, I know that there are varieties of cultures and ideas in each country. I realize the problems in trying to communicate with others in strange lands. These problems arise from differences in culture, language, religion, race, climate, values, and

experiences. When someone confronts problems in a foreign country, he will feel lost and alone. He feels like a stranger or an outsider. Many foreign students cried and were frustrated when they did not know what to do, where to go, or even who they could trust. Empathy and understanding are very important. You will gain much more than you expect from your new friends.

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APPENDIX A  
SURVEY OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN  
CULTURAL GROUPS

DIRECTIONS: This questionnaire attempts to discover communication problems and pitfalls between American and foreign students at Utah State University. Answers will be kept completely anonymous, but will be extremely important in completing a master's thesis for the Department of Communication in this area. Your time and consideration would be greatly appreciated.

Please read each question carefully and check the right answer or answers, in some cases, depending upon your own personal experiences and feelings. Please answer the open-ended question as fully as possible, using the back of the questionnaire if necessary. Thank you very much for your cooperation.

## Foreign Student's Questionnaire

MALE\_\_\_ FEMALE\_\_\_ AGE\_\_\_ OCCUPATION\_\_\_

RELIGION\_\_\_ NATIONALITY\_\_\_

1. Have your communication experiences with Americans changed your attitudes about them? If so, in what direction?

MORE POSITIVE\_\_\_ NO CHANGE\_\_\_ MORE NEGATIVE\_\_\_

2. Have your communication experiences with Americans changed your attitudes about their country? If so, in what direction?

MORE POSITIVE\_\_\_ NO CHANGE\_\_\_ MORE NEGATIVE\_\_\_

3. How long had you studied English before coming to America? \_\_\_\_\_

4. Have any American groups asked you to talk to them about your country?

YES\_\_\_ NO\_\_\_ If so, under what circumstances? \_\_\_\_\_

5. What has been their typical reaction to your discussions about your country?

SINCERE APPRECIATION\_\_\_ NEUTRALITY\_\_\_  
HOSTILITY\_\_\_ OTHER\_\_\_

6. How do you feel about yourself as a person when communicating with Americans?

INFERIOR\_\_\_ SUPERIOR\_\_\_ EQUAL\_\_\_

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

7. Would you like to know more about America?

YES\_\_\_ NO\_\_\_ DON'T KNOW\_\_\_

8. Have you ever felt frustration when trying to communicate with Americans? If so, why? \_\_\_\_\_

9. Would you be willing to date an American?

YES\_\_\_ NO\_\_\_ DON'T KNOW\_\_\_

10. Do you have a close American friend?

YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

11. When talking with Americans, approximately how far apart do you stand?

9-12 inches \_\_\_\_\_ 15-18 inches \_\_\_\_\_ 22-24 inches \_\_\_\_\_  
Other \_\_\_\_\_

12. Which of the following techniques do you use most often when communicating with Americans? Check more than one technique if you use them.

VERBAL LANGUAGE \_\_\_\_\_  
FACIAL EXPRESSIONS \_\_\_\_\_  
HAND GESTURES \_\_\_\_\_  
TALKING LOUDER OR SLOWER THAN USUAL \_\_\_\_\_  
WRITING \_\_\_\_\_  
OTHERS \_\_\_\_\_

13. Which of the following contributes to misunderstandings between yourself and Americans? Check more than one if it applies.

VOCABULARY PROBLEMS \_\_\_\_\_  
MISPRONUNCIATION \_\_\_\_\_  
DIFFERENT CULTURAL EXPERIENCES AND MANNERISMS \_\_\_\_\_  
INCORRECT GRAMMAR \_\_\_\_\_  
DIFFERENT BELIEFS, VALUES, AND EXPECTATIONS \_\_\_\_\_  
OTHERS \_\_\_\_\_

14. Can you understand an American better if you have had quite a bit of contact with him/her?

YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_ DON'T KNOW \_\_\_\_\_

15. Do you think it is possible for you to communicate effectively with Americans?

YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_ DON'T KNOW \_\_\_\_\_

16. Do you think you would gain any advantages by knowing Americans well?

YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_ DON'T KNOW \_\_\_\_\_  
If so, what advantages do you think you could gain?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



17. If you were invited to an American university home-coming banquet, would you attend?

YES \_\_\_\_\_ PERHAPS \_\_\_\_\_ PROBABLY NOT \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_  
DON'T KNOW \_\_\_\_\_

18. How do you think communication between foreign people and Americans could be improved?

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## American Student's Questionnaire

MALE \_\_\_\_\_ FEMALE \_\_\_\_\_ AGE \_\_\_\_\_ OCCUPATION \_\_\_\_\_

RELIGION \_\_\_\_\_ NATIONALITY \_\_\_\_\_

1. What foreign languages do you know? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Have your communication experiences with foreigners changed your attitudes about them? If so, in what direction?

MORE POSITIVE \_\_\_\_\_ NO CHANGE \_\_\_\_\_ MORE NEGATIVE \_\_\_\_\_

3. Have your communication experiences with foreigners changed your attitudes about their country? If so, in what direction?

MORE POSITIVE \_\_\_\_\_ NO CHANGE \_\_\_\_\_ MORE NEGATIVE \_\_\_\_\_

4. How do you feel about yourself as a person when communicating to a foreigner?

INFERIOR \_\_\_\_\_ SUPERIOR \_\_\_\_\_ EQUAL \_\_\_\_\_

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

5. Would you like to know more about foreign countries?

YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_ DON'T KNOW \_\_\_\_\_

6. Have you ever felt frustration when trying to communicate with a foreigner? If so, why?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. Would you be willing to date a foreigner?

YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_ DON'T KNOW \_\_\_\_\_

8. Do you have a close foreign friend?

YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

9. When talking with a foreigner, approximately how far apart do you stand?

9-12 inches \_\_\_\_\_ 15-18 inches \_\_\_\_\_ 22-24 inches \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

10. Which of the following techniques do you use most often when communicating with a foreigner? Check more than one if you use them.

VERBAL LANGUAGE \_\_\_\_\_  
 FACIAL EXPRESSIONS \_\_\_\_\_  
 HAND GESTURES \_\_\_\_\_  
 TALKING LOUDER OR SLOWER THAN USUAL \_\_\_\_\_  
 WRITING \_\_\_\_\_  
 OTHERS \_\_\_\_\_

11. Which of the following contributes to misunderstanding between you and foreigners? Check more than one if it applies.

VOCABULARY PROBLEMS \_\_\_\_\_  
 MISPRONUNCIATION \_\_\_\_\_  
 DIFFERENT CULTURAL EXPERIENCES AND MANNERISMS \_\_\_\_\_  
 INCORRECT GRAMMAR \_\_\_\_\_  
 DIFFERENT BELIEFS, VALUES, AND EXPECTATIONS \_\_\_\_\_  
 OTHERS \_\_\_\_\_

12. Can you understand foreigners better if you have had a lot of contact with them?

YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_ DON'T KNOW \_\_\_\_\_

13. Do you think it is possible for you to communicate effectively with foreigners?

YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_ DON'T KNOW \_\_\_\_\_

14. Do you think you would gain any advantages by knowing foreigners?

YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_ DON'T KNOW \_\_\_\_\_

15. If you were invited to the International Banquet at the university, would you attend? YES \_\_\_\_\_

PERHAPS \_\_\_\_\_ PROBABLY NOT \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_ DON'T KNOW \_\_\_\_\_

16. How do you think communication between Americans and foreigners could be improved?

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

Table 1

## Questionnaire Presented to Foreign Students

Questions	Percent		
	Grand Total	Women	Men
(1) More Positive	35	30	36
No Change	53	50	55
More Negative	12	20	9
(2) More Positive	24	22	25
No Change	56	67	53
More Negative	20	11	22
(4) Yes	54	50	55
No	46	50	45
(5) Sincere Appreciation	30	0	38
Neutrality	53	100	42
Hostility	17	0	21
(6) Inferior	10	0	13
Superior	5	0	6
Equal	85	100	81
(7) Yes	89	78	94
No	6	11	3
Don't Know	6	11	3
(9) Yes	43	67	38
No	18	44	10
Don't Know	15	0	20
(10) Yes	43	67	38
No	57	33	63
(11) 9-12 inches	20	22	19
15-18 inches	33	33	33
22-24 inches	47	44	48
(12) Verbal Language	49	44	50
Facial Expression	27	22	28
Hand Gestures	44	55	41
Talking Louder or Slower than Usual	63	55	66
Writing	15	11	16

Table 1 (Continued)

Questions	Percent		
	Grand Total	Women	Men
(13) Vocabulary Problems	71	67	72
Mispronunciation	61	78	56
Different Cultural Experiences and Mannerisms	17	22	16
Incorrect Grammar	24	22	25
Different Beliefs, Values, Expectations	20	11	22
(14) Yes	79	89	76
No	5	0	6
Don't Know	17	11	18
(15) Yes	88	100	84
No	2	0	3
Don't Know	10	0	13
(16) Yes	76	89	72
No	7	0	9
Don't Know	17	11	19
(17) Yes	51	67	48
Perhaps	34	22	39
Probably Not	5	0	2
No	0	0	6
Don't Know	7	11	6

Table 2  
Questionnaire Presented to American Students

Questions	Percent		
	Grand Total	Women	Men
(1) More Positive	56	62	44
No Change	38	28	56
More Negative	7	10	0
(3) More Positive	40	48	25
No Change	49	41	63
More Negative	11	10	13
(4) Superior	18	14	21
Inferior	7	7	6
Equal	76	79	69
(5) Yes	100	100	100
No	0	0	0
Don't Know	0	0	0
(7) Yes	53	41	75
No	26	41	0
Don't Know	21	19	25
(8) Yes	60	56	69
No	40	44	31
(9) 9-12 inches	9	14	0
15-18 inches	26	24	29
22-24 inches	66	62	71
(10) Verbal Language	81	81	81
Facial Expression	55	62	44
Hand Gestures	60	62	56
Talking Louder or Slower than Usual	50	58	38
Writing	12	15	6
(11) Vocabulary Problems	76	77	75
Mispronunciation	43	46	38
Different Cultural Experiences and Mannerisms	57	65	44
Incorrect Grammar	12	8	19
Different Beliefs, Values and Expectations	21	35	0

Table 2 (Continued)

Questions	Percent		
	Grand Total	Women	Men
(12) Yes	91	89	94
No	0	0	0
Don't Know	9	11	6
(13) Yes	81	78	87
No	5	7	0
Don't know	14	15	13
(14) Yes	93	92	94
No	2	4	0
Don't Know	5	4	6
(15) Yes	44	44	44
Perhaps	40	37	41
Probably Not	14	19	6
No	0	0	0
Don't Know	2	0	6



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